



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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DNR ISSUES EMERGENCY ORDER TO CHICKASAW COUNTY TRUCK WASH

Incident serves as a reminder that truck washes need construction, operation permits

MEDIA CONTACT: Mike Wade, DNR Manchester field office, at (563) 927-2640 or Mike.Wade@dnr.iowa.gov

JERICO — The DNR has issued an emergency administrative order to prevent future wastewater discharges from a truck wash near Jerico in Chickasaw County.

The DNR issued the order to Reicks View Farms Quality Meats, LLC, owned by Dale Reicks of Lawler, which operates two livestock truck washing facilities southeast of Jerico. Residents called the DNR and other local officials earlier this month to report that a wastewater storage lagoon used by the facilities was overflowing.

Upon investigation, the DNR found that wastewater – in this case, the water drained away after washing out livestock trucks – was overflowing from the storage tank in several places. The tank is located within 10 feet of two tile intakes, which carry runoff water into a tributary of Crane Creek. Samples of wastewater taken from pools around the tank contained ammonia, which can be toxic to fish and other aquatic life in large amounts.

“There was no direct indication that any wastewater reached a stream, although it did appear that wastewater may have entered a tile intake, given the rainy weather around the time of the investigation,” said Mike Wade of the DNR’s Manchester field office.

In addition, the DNR found that Reicks View Farms had a construction permit to build the wastewater holding tank, but did not construct a pumping station as the permit required. The facility did not apply for a required Iowa operating permit for the disposal of the wastewater contained in the holding tank. The truck wash also land-applied about 1.2 million gallons of wastewater from the holding tank over two dates in 2007 without a permit.

“We have a number of truck washes being built across the state, but many of these facilities may not be aware that they need wastewater construction permits, operation permits and land application permits,” Wade said. “We require these permits because they help protect water quality in our streams.”

The DNR has ordered Reicks View Farms to immediately lower the holding tank and to maintain the wastewater level in the tank according to limits set in its construction permit. The DNR also ordered Reicks View Farms to apply for an Iowa operating permit for the truck wash wastewater disposal system and to land apply all accumulated wastewater in the storage system in compliance with set terms.

“Situations like this concern us, as the discharge from the tank may have adversely affected the tributary to Crane Creek,” Wade said. “When you land apply wastewater without a DNR survey of the land or soil tests, it can affect groundwater. Plus, when you don’t test wastewater for nitrogen levels, we can have excess nitrogen running off the land into our streams.”

Writer: Jessie Brown

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BEACH MONITORING BEGINS AT STATE PARK, OTHER BEACHES

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DES MOINES — As the temperature continues to warm around the state, many are preparing for another summer filled with outdoor activities, including spending time at Iowa state park beaches. The DNR will again monitor and report on the water quality of these beaches to protect public health and enhance understanding of water quality.

The DNR collects and analyzes water samples routinely at Iowa’s 37 state park beaches. The samples are compared to water quality standards to determine the risk of waterborne illnesses for swimmers. Sampling frequency at high-use beaches this year has been

doubled by the DNR as most beaches will have samples collected at least twice per week. This allows results from monitoring to be closer to the weekends when the majority of swimmers are spending time at the beach.

Monitoring at all state park beaches began Monday and will continue into September.

Iowans can find the weekly results on the DNR Web site at www.iowadnr.gov by clicking on “Beach Monitoring.” DNR’s interactive mapping service, the Iowa Water Web, graphically shows the current status of the water quality at beaches, including any advisories posted.

“Our monitoring over the past eight swimming seasons has shown that our state park beaches are safe for swimming the vast majority of the time,” said Eric O’Brien, DNR beach monitoring coordinator. “The beach monitoring results in 2007 were the lowest we had seen in a number of years and we hope to see continued improvement in the water quality readings.”

From 2000 to 2007, beaches exceeded the geometric mean standard (a type of average calculated using five results over 30 days) less than 8 percent of the time. Beaches exceeded the one-time high standard less than 7 percent of the time. This includes the most consistently low results at beaches in five years during the summer of 2007.

In addition to state park beaches, 60 county- and city-run beaches and other locally managed recreational areas have volunteered to participate in the beach monitoring program. These beaches will sample during the same time period as state owned beaches. While weekly monitoring results from these beaches will be posted on the DNR Web site, locally managed beaches *will decide independently* whether or not to post swimming advisories when bacteria levels run high.

Just as in 2005-2007, state park beaches will post a “swimming is not recommended” sign if:

- The geometric mean exceeds the water quality standard (the most recent five samples within a 30-day period exceeds 126 colony-forming units of *E. coli* bacteria per 100 ml of water)
- The beach has had bacteria problems in the past (causing it to be classified as a “vulnerable” or “transitional” beach) and one sample exceeds Iowa’s one-time maximum standard (235 colony-forming units of *E. coli* bacteria per 100 ml of water)

The DNR considers beaches “vulnerable” after more than two years of high geometric means within a five year period. They are no longer “vulnerable” when this condition no longer applies.

“Transitional” beaches include beaches where bacteria problems have been resolved or no longer pose a serious threat. Beaches in this transitional class may be removed from this list if they do not exceed the geometric mean standard for one year.

Posting a swimming advisory does not close a beach. However, the DNR reserves the right to close a beach in the event of a documented health risk including things such as (but not limited to) a wastewater bypass, spills of hazardous chemicals or localized outbreaks of an infectious disease.

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LAKE WAPELLO TO UNDERGO MAJOR LAKE RENOVATION

MEDIA CONTACT: Mark Flammang, DNR fisheries, at (cell) 641-895-2327.

DRAKESVILLE – The Iowa Department of Natural Resources will move ahead with a major lake renovation at 250-acre Lake Wapello, which will include draining the entire lake. The DNR had been working to draw down the water level to fix a pipe that ruptured in the dam since April, but consistent spring rains hindered the effort and the lake is still not down to the leak.

“We made the decision to empty the lake to take care of a number of problems and to do a large scale lake restoration,” said Mark Flammang, area fisheries biologist for the DNR.

Flammang said the fishery was in a state of decline since gizzard shad were introduced into the system and that decline would only continue. Flammang was collecting game fish in Lake Wapello on Thursday that will be released in other area public lakes, before the lake is emptied.

“We manage our lakes to have a balance of fish species that will do well in these systems, and when someone introduces a species like gizzard shad they completely offset the lake balance. Gizzard shad will eventually overtake other desirable species and will dominate the lake,” Flammang said. “I’m sure their intentions were good, but leave the stocking to us.”

Eliminating gizzard shad is one goal, and while the lake is low, Flammang said workers will begin deepening the shoreline, protecting it with riprap, installing sediment ponds to improve the water quality, installing in-lake fish structure to concentrate fish for boat anglers and shore anglers, and add fishing jetties.

“We were eventually going to have to lower the lake to eliminate the gizzard shad in a few years, so with the leak in the dam, we moved up the time table and will be fixing the leak and restoring the lake,” he said. “Lake Wapello has been a tremendous fishery for much of its 75 years and after the work is done it should be better than ever. This will be a big shot in the arm for the lake. It is still an excellent lake, and will continue to be in the future.”

The goal is to have the project completed by the fall. The non-water related park features and campground will remain open during the construction. The bait shop and restaurant

will not be in operation this year, but the restaurant will remain available for renting out as a lodge through the park office.

Writer: Mick Klemesrud

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PALO ALTO AND CLAY COUNTY RESIDENTS ASKED TO SHARE IDEAS ON IMPROVING LOST ISLAND LAKE

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RUTHVEN – Iowans interested in improving Lost Island Lake in Palo Alto and Clay counties can attend a meeting June 4 to discuss and review a recent water quality study and its suggestions for improving the lake.

Lost Island Lake is on the state's impaired waters list because of turbidity, or cloudy water, from excessive algae growth. This impacts recreation at the lake and aquatic life.

The study, or DNR water quality improvement plan, looks at the problems and potential solutions for the problems in Lost Island Lake. It is designed as a guide for improving the lake for local resource agencies, partners, stakeholders and residents.

"We'd like to hear people's comments on the study, so we can work those ideas into the plan for improving Lost Island Lake," said Bill Graham with the DNR's Watershed Improvement program. "We also look forward to helping locals use the plan to improve their lake."

The DNR will ask Iowans for their input at a June 4 meeting in Ruthven. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. at the Lost Island Nature Center, 3259 355th Ave.

Staff from the DNR's Lake Restoration program, Watershed Improvement program and Fisheries and Wildlife bureaus will also be on hand to answer questions. The Lost Island Ruthven Betterment Association and Lost Island Protective Association will help moderate the meeting.

Those not able to attend the public meeting can receive more information at www.iowadnr.gov/water/watershed/tmdl/ and submit comments on the plan (by June 23) via the following ways:

E-mail: William.Graham@dnr.iowa.gov

Telephone: Bill Graham at (515) 281-5917

Mail: William Graham, care of Iowa DNR, Wallace State Office Building,
502 E. Ninth St., Des Moines, Iowa 50319

After gathering Iowans' comments, the DNR will forward the final plan, also called by its technical name of Total Maximum Daily Load, to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval. Local groups interested in helping Lost Island Lake can then use the plan to assist their improvement efforts.

Writer: Jessie Brown